Victorian Student Register Data Quality Manual



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Overview

1. This *Data Quality Manual* provides instructions to users of the Victorian Student Register (VSR) on how to maintain Victorian Student Number (VSN) information contained in the VSR system.
2. A Victorian Student Number (VSN) is a randomly generated nine digit number assigned to all Victorian students as a unique identifier. Every student under 25 years of age is given a VSN when they first enrol at a Victorian education or training provider. For most students, this occurs when they enrol at a school in Foundation level. However, a student who does not already have a VSN will be given one when enrolled at a Victorian education or training provider any time before they turn 25 years of age (for example, because they have relocated from interstate). Students keep the same VSN connected to their personal information when they change education or training providers in Victoria.
3. The Victorian Student Register (VSR) is a secure database containing VSNs for enrolled Victorian students up to the age of 25, as well as additional ‘related information’[[1]](#footnote-1) for each student, including:
	1. the student’s full name
	2. the student’s date of birth
	3. the student’s gender
	4. the date on which the student is enrolled at an education or training provider or registered for home schooling by the VRQA
	5. the date on which the student’s enrolment at an education or training provider or registration for home schooling is cancelled; and
	6. the records of changes which have been made to data.
4. The VSR is managed by the VCAA under delegated authority from the Secretary of the Department of Education. Part 5,3A of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), and the *Secretary’s Guidelines on the Victorian Student Number* govern VSN functions and outline roles and responsibilities with regard to these functions.
5. Education and training providers have a legislative obligation to notify the VSR of student enrolment information including enrolment, change of details, exit and enrolment cancellation.
6. Education and training providers provide these mandated notifications to the VSR either through manual entry, or by sending and receiving information automatically via student management systems.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this manual is to provide education and training staff with the necessary guidance to explain how to:
	1. execute notification processes to be followed to meet their VSN notification obligations; and
	2. meet standards for entering students’ identifying information into the VSR.

Glossary

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| Term | Definition |
| Access Restriction | Provider designated indicator signifying that a court order is in effect restricting access to the student by one or more persons.  |
| Active VSN | An Active VSN is a VSN that has been nominated as the delegated VSN in a relationship of 2 or more VSNs. The other VSNs in the relationship are cancelled.  |
| Cancel Enrolment | Indicates that a student previously enrolled at a provider has not physically presented at the institution for classes. Cancelling a student enrolment removes the record and the VSN from the VSR if there is only one participation record for the student. |
| Current Name | If a name change occurs a student’s participation record will show the Registered Name and the Current Name. |
| Enrolled Name | The name contained within a student’s participation record, usually the same as the Registered Name unless there has been a name change.  |
| Enrolment Date | The date the provider deems the student has commenced with the provider. |
| Enrolment Record | Record that indicates a student’s participation at a provider and includes the enrolment date, exit date, enrolled Full Time Equivalent (FTE), enrolled first name, enrolled last name, access restriction, and provider student identifier. See also Participation Record. |
| Exit Enrolment | Indicates that a student previously enrolled has exited the school by transferring to another Victorian school or by leaving the Victorian education system. |
| Participation record | This is created for a student when a provider sends an enrolment transaction to the VSR. See also Enrolment Record. |
| Provider  | An educational service provider including:* schools (government, Catholic and independent),
* non-school sectors
* TAFE colleges
* Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
* Adult & Community Education (ACE) providers
* home schooling (registered by VRQA).

Universities are not in scope. |
| Removed VSN | A Removed VSN belongs to a student record which has been deleted from the VSR due to the cancellation of the only participation record for that VSN. |
| Registered Name | The name by which a student is initially registered on the VSR. |
| Student Details | Details about the student consisting of mandatory (M) and non- mandatory (NM) fields such as last name (M), first name (M), date of birth (M), and gender (M), middle name (NM). |
| Student Management Transaction | One of the following actions that can be performed by a provider for a particular student: * Enrol Student
* Change Student Details
* Exit Student
* Cancel Enrolment.
 |
| Student Record | A Student Registration Record containing VSN, registered name, current name, date of birth and gender. |
| Validation Error | This error occurs when data supplied to the VSR system does not meet mandatory or field length or data format requirements. |
| Validation Summary | A Validation Summary displays validation messages associated with Student Management Web Browser Processing faults on a web browser. |
| VSN | Victorian Student Number is a unique nine digit number assigned to a student from the Victorian Student Register system. |
| VSR | Victorian Student Register is the database which supports the assignment of VSNs. |
| VSR Central Exception | VSR Central Exceptions occur when specific processing rules for submitted data are not met.  |

The Victorian Student Register

User set up

Government providers

1. Government providers are able to access the VSR automatically via their localised student administration system.

Non-government providers

1. Non-government education and training providers may log in directly to the VSR as online users, or connect with the VSR via a software management system.
2. Initially some new non-government education and training providers will need to contact the VCAA at vsr@education.vic.gov.au to request the application form for VSR login credentials and a password. The application form needs to be endorsed by the CEO or principal.
3. If the application is approved, the provider will be given login credentials which are attached to their Provider ID to access the VSR. If they are a new user, providers will also receive a confirmation email confirming their user name and password (this should be saved for future reference). Providers must not attempt to change this allocated password.

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| When not using the VSR, it is best to close the VSR web browser by clicking on the ‘log out’ button on the top right corner of the VSR homepage. |

Information content

1. The VSR System records the following information about students:
	* VSN
	* First Name, Last Name (mandatory) and Middle Name (non-mandatory) – known as the Registered names
	* Date of Birth
	* Gender (Male (M), Female (F) or Self-described (S))
	* Access Restriction
	* Deceased Status.
2. The VSR System records the following information about enrolments:
	* Provider
	* Provider Student ID
	* Enrolled First Name, Last Name and Middle Name
	* Enrolment Date
	* Time Fraction at Enrolment
	* Exit Date.

Data quality

1. Given the VSR maintains identifying information for each Victorian student for the purposes of verifying student identity and monitoring and tracking the movement of students within the Victorian education system, it is critical that the information contained within it is accurate to ensure that:
	1. student information is matched correctly when a student transitions between schools and subsequent education providers
	2. statistical information on student movement within the education which informs education policy is up to date and correct.
2. At the system level, the main consequence of education and training providers transferring inaccurate data to the VSR is that system student identification and matching process will not integrate information that does not match, resulting in a system identified eorror on a student record called an ‘exception’. VCAA review and action these exceptions, to ensure student records are accurately maintained. If the resolution of an exception is not straightforward, the VCAA may contact the provider to request further information.
3. Data integrity requirements for the VSR include that the student name on the VSR will be a student’s full name, as it appears on official identification documents such as a birth certificate or passport. Other names, such as preferred and anglicised names, will only be included if supported by an official identification document. Pseudonyms are not required on the VSR, as there are restrictions on who can the access, use and disclose the information, as well as information security and privacy protections in place to ensure student personal information and their identity is appropriately protected.

VSN notification requirements

1. The accuracy of the VSR is dependent on providers notifying the VSR of all updates to a VSN and related information including for:
	* Student enrolments and transfers
	* Updates to student personal details
	* Student exits and transfers
	* Student enrolment cancellations.

Student enrolments and transfers

1. The VSR receives notifications of student enrolment, including the date of enrolment from the education and training provider. The date of enrolment is the first date of the student’s attendance at the provider. When a student enrols in education or training in Victoria for the first time (as opposed to transfers from another Victorian provider) the VSR will register the student with their identifying information, create a new VSN and create an enrolment record for the student at the provider that is enrolling the student.
2. For the student’s subsequent transfers to other providers, the VSR will use the student’s VSN and identifying information to verify the student’s identity after which it will create a new enrolment record for the student at the new school.
3. Where a student is unable to identify their VSN, the VSR will attempt five times to retrieve the VSN using data matching rules, and then enrol the student.
4. There are three common enrolment scenarios.
	1. Student’s first enrolment at a Victorian school
	2. Student has a VSN, but the VSN is not available
	3. Student provides their VSN.

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| ***Scenario 1: Student’s first enrolment at a Victorian education and training provider***Students enrolling for the first time at a Victorian School will not have been issued with a VSN. This typically only include students enrolling for Foundation or students coming from interstate or overseas. Schools using an integrated student management system will use that system to enrol the student in the usual manner and indicate that the student is a NEW student for the purposes of the VSN and has not previously been issued with a VSN. The student management system will automatically notify the VSR of the enrolment and process the returned VSN information from the VSR, and link the VSN to the student’s record. Schools using this approach should refer to their student management system’s user and help documentation for further information. ***Scenario 2: Student has VSN, but VSN is unknown*** In general, students that enrol at an education and training provider who are transferring from another provider and do not know their VSN fall into this category, such as grade six students transitioning to secondary school. Providers using **an** integrated student management system, complete the data entry in their system as per usual, and indicate that the VSN is Unknown. The student management system will automatically notify the VSR. Where the VSR is able to find a single exact match with the student’s identifying details, the VSN will be returned and allocated to the student’s record in the school’s student management system. If a single exact match cannot be found, an exception is raised and VCAA staff will contact the provider to resolve the exception. ***Scenario 3: Student provides their VSN on the enrolment form*** A student who presents to a provider with a VSN Notification or other communication that contains their VSN is covered by this scenario. Schools using an integrated student management system should enter the provided VSN into the student management system with the student’s other enrolment details. The student management system will automatically notify the enrolment information to the VSR. The VSR will verify the VSN and identifying details against the registered information. Where the VSR is unable to verify the information, an exception will be raised and VCAA staff will contact the school to follow up.  |

Updates to student personal details

1. The VSR requires notification of changes or corrections to student identifying details (name, gender, date of birth) to ensure accuracy of enrolment records.
2. There may be circumstances in which the personal information stored in the VSR needs to be updated, for example if a student changes their name. As a key purpose of the VSN and related information is to track student progress, and data integrity is key to this process, the name on the VSR will be a student’s full name, as it appears on official identification documents such as a birth certificate or passport. Other names, such as preferred and anglicised names, will only be included if supported by an official identification document. Pseudonyms are not required on the VSR as there are strict restrictions on who can the access, use and disclose of the information and stringent requirements on the information security and privacy protections that must be in place in order for access to be granted.
3. For students who are enrolled at an education and training provider, all requests to change personal information stored in the VSR must be made through their provider. The student must provide the relevant information to be updated, and any required documentation, to the provider. The provider must provide this information to the VCAA, who will then update the information if all requirements are met.
4. In cases where a student wishes to self-describe as a different gender but has not yet officially changed their legal details, there is an option to record gender as self-described.
5. Schools using an integrated student management system should update the student’s information in the student management system in the usual manner. This transaction will create an automatic exception alerting the VCAA to contact the school to verify whether it is a genuine change of the student’s identifying details such change of date of birth and in some cases change of name and gender. The provider is required to verify the legal documentation relating to the change of student identifying details.

Student exits and transfers

1. The VSR requires notification when a student leaves an education and training provider, including the exit date of the student. Where the exit is due to the death of a student, an additional ‘deceased’ indicator should be set. The exit date is the date that the student last attended the school. The VSR is able to accept exit dates up to one month in the future.

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| If a student is transferring to another provider, providers should give the student/parent/guardian a VSN notification report which the student can use as part of their enrolment at the new provider. |

1. Providers using an integrated student management system should exit the student using the exit/transfer functionality in the student management system. The student management system will automatically notify the exit, including the exit date changes to the VSR. The VSR will verify the VSN and identifying details against the registered information. If the VSN is verified successfully, the student’s exit is recorded. Where the VSR is unable to verify the information, an exception will be raised the VCAA will contact the provider to resolve the exception.

Student enrolment cancellations

1. In some instances a student may be enrolled at a school (and the enrolment is notified to the VSR), but the student never attends the provider, requiring the enrolment to be cancelled. The VSR requires notification when an enrolment is cancelled if the enrolment was previously notified. This transaction will create an automatic exception alerting the VCAA to contact the provider to verify whether it is a genuine cancellation of enrolment (the student did not actually attend classes) and not an exit date that should entered. Cancelling a student’s enrolment cancels their entire participation record at your school. If the student doesn’t have either a prior or subsequent enrolment at another provider with that VSN, the cancel transaction also removes the VSN and new one will need to be allocated.
2. Providers using an integrated student management system should cancel the student’s enrolment using the student management system. The student management system will automatically notify the enrolment cancellation to the VSR. An exception will be raised and the VCAA will contact the school to resolve the eception as above.

Data entry conventions

First names

1. The student’s name on the VSR will be a student’s full name, as it appears on official identification documents such as a birth certificate or passport. It is important that no additional information or indicators be used as part of the first name.
2. Where students only have a single name, the name provided should be repeated in both the first given name and last name fields.
3. Multiple first names should be separated by either:
	* a single space or
	* hyphen without leading or trailing spaces.
4. Separation of the names should be based on the format in which the names appear on legal identification documentation or the provider’s enrolment form to ensure a high level of consistency between enrolments with different providers.
5. Preferred names must not be included in the first given name field.
6. Middle names must not be included in the first given name field.

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| ***Examples*** **Valid** first name: * Amanda
* John Paul
* John-Paul
* James Stephen
* Paula Michelle Jane

**Invalid** first names: * Amanda (1234)
	+ **Reason**: First name contains reference information (numbers and brackets)
* Amanda (Mandy)
	+ **Reason**: First name contains preferred name
* Frederick\*\*\*\*\*\*\*
	+ **Reason**: First name contains indicator information (asterisks)
* John Paul
	+ **Reason**: Double space between multiple first names
* John – Paul
	+ **Reason**: Space before and after hyphen
* ZZPaul
	+ **Reason**: Name contains indicator information (ZZ)
 |

Last names

1. The student’s name on the VSR will be a student’s full name, as it appears on official identification documents such as a birth certificate or passport. It is important that no additional information or indicators be used as part of the last name.
2. Where students only have a single name, the name provided should be repeated in both the first given name and last name fields.
3. Multiple last names should be separated by either:
	* a single space or
	* hyphen without leading or trailing spaces.
4. Middle names **must not** be included in the last name field.
5. Preferred names  **must not** be included in the last name. Instead preferred names should be in the preferred name field.
6. Take special care when entering names beginning with Mc, Mc’ or Mac, like McDonald, Mc Donald, MacDonald, Mac Donald. Our research shows that only about 5% of names beginning with “Mc” have a space after the Mc, and very few “Mac” names have a space after the Mac.
7. Take special care when entering names with apostrophes such as O’Neill. In nearly all cases, the name should not have spaces between the apostrophe and letters e.g. O’Neill or O’Reilly. Our research also shows that the spelling O Neil (i.e. without apostrophe) is a spelling mistake and should actually contain an apostrophe.

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| ***Examples*** **Valid** last name: * Smith
* Petersen-Smith
* Drummond Smith

**Invalid** last names:* Smith (1234)
	+ **Reason**: Name contains reference information (numbers and brackets)
* Smith-Petersen (Smith)
	+ **Reason**: Name contains additional information (numbers and brackets)
* Drummond\*\*\*\*\*\*\*
	+ **Reason**: Name contains indicator information (asterisks)
* ZZPetersen-Smith
	+ **Reason**: Name contains indicator information (ZZ)
* Drummond – Smith
	+ **Reason**: Space before hyphen
* ZZSmith
	+ **Reason**: Name contains indicator information (ZZ)
* Smith/Petersen
	+ **Reason**: Name should be separated by hyphens or spaces
 |

Date of birth

1. The VSR holds student date of birth in the format: DD/MM/YYYY.
2. The date of birth should be obtained from legal identity documents, such as the student’s birth certificate or passport.
3. Take extra care when entering date of birth information from overseas students. A common mistake is to use alternative formats for MM/DD (days and months), which are incorrect in the VSR.

Gender

1. Records of a student’s gender in the VSR forms part of their identifying information. Gender in the VSR can be recorded as:
	* M (male)
	* F (female); or
	* S (self-described).

Self described is offered as a category a student may wish to nominate if their affirmed gender identity differs from that which is recorded on their legal identity documentation.

VSN

1. The VSN is a nine digit number which contains an internal ‘check-digit’ for validation. The VSN is generated by the VSR.
2. Where schools use an integrated student management system, the entered VSN will be validated by the integrated student management system according to the check-digit calculation rules.

VSR exceptions

1. When a VSN transaction cannot be automatically processed an exception is created. Exceptions are created for a variety of reasons, including:
	* The student’s name at the new provider does not exactly match the details already in the VSR, or the date of birth or gender are different.
	* The enrolment transaction from the school indicates that the student should have a VSN, but they do not.
	* The student is a potential duplicate, e.g. a Foundation student who moves schools in the same year or whose parent/guardian has enrolled them in multiple schools.
	* The student is from interstate or overseas and is not a Foundation student.
	* All changes to date of birth and gender details, and all cancel transactions.

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| It is critical that the personal information entered when a student enrols for the first time or transfers between education and training providers is accurate, as this ensures that the existing information in the VSR for that student matches exactly.  |

Change of student details transaction

1. Change of details exceptions occur when the requested change transaction cannot be completed by the VSR System due to one of the following reasons:
* If the student registration record identified by the VSN does not exist on the VSR System.
* If the student registration record identified by the VSN indicates that the student is deceased.
* If a new date of birth or a new gender is requested. Direct updates to the date of birth and/or gender by a provider user are not permitted. Where a change has been requested for a date of birth or gender, providers may be asked to provide proof of identity details for the student to the VSR Operations Team. It should be noted that date of birth and gender details form an integral part of the registration record and therefore cannot be changed readily.
* If the student does not have an active participation record at an education or training provider.
1. In these instances, providers will be contacted by telephone or email by the VSR Operations Team to resolve the issue. Providers are therefore advised to have supporting documents such as birth certificates or enrolment forms readily available.

Exit student transaction

1. This type of VSR exception occurs when the requested exit student transaction cannot be completed by the VSR System, due to one of the following reasons:
* If the date of birth or gender do not match the VSN on the student registration record.
* If the student registration record does not exist on the VSR System.
* If the student registration record identified by the VSN is suspended and any linked VSN does not have a participation record with the provider.
* If the student does not have an active participation record at the provider.
* If the exit date is prior to the enrolment date for the provider.

Cancelling student enrolment transaction

1. Cancelling a student enrolment removes the record and the VSN from the VSR, if the student has only one participation record. This transaction indicates that the student was previously enrolled but has not attended classes and the provider has had no teaching contact with them.
2. In these cases, a VSR exception occurs for all requested cancel enrolment transactions and the provider will be contacted by telephone or email by the VSR Operations Team to resolve the issue. It is therefore important to have evidence that the student has never attended the education or training provider, such as a written instruction from the principal or their delegate and or a statement from the parent/guardian of the student confirming their non-attendance.

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| This transaction should not to be confused with exiting a student.If a student has attended classes, even for a short time, then the exit student transaction must be used instead. |

Conclusion

1. The quality of the data within the VSR is only as good as the information provided to it by education and training providers. The VCAA therefore relies on the diligence of providers, to not only ensure that student personal information provided to the VSR is correct, but that it is notified to the VCAA in a timely manner. To support education and training providers to fulfil their legislative mandate to supply accurate and up to date information to the VSR, the VCAA makes enquiries with providers on outstanding information that has not been submitted to VSR or requires further clarification.
2. This manual has been created by the VCAA as part of our commitment to working with providers to ensure that they are compliant with the Secretary’s expectations about the timely submission of accurate VSN information.

Please contact vsr@education.vic.gov.au if you need further support.

1. See definition of ‘related information’ in section 5.3A.1 of the Act. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)